

A Memorial Concert

***Solo, operatic and
choral music by
Malcolm Hill
(1944-2021)***



**Prior Park College Chapel
Sunday 17 July 2022**

A MEMORIAL CONCERT FOR MALCOLM HILL

PROGRAMME

Women on Top (excerpts) *Bath Chamber Opera*

Avon Street - en plein air: Dawn, Midnight *Chandos Singers*

Alone Walking *Julia Rushworth*

Bath - the Graveyard of Ambition (excerpts) *Bath Chamber Opera*

Sonnet LXV *Jane Hunt*

The Walrus and the Carpenter *Chandos Singers*

Domino quando veneris *Katharine Adams*

Dr Malcolm Hill, composer, organist, improviser, musicologist, and conductor, studied at the Royal Academy of Music and in Holland and Sweden, winning many prizes, and was subsequently a Professor at the RAM for many years.

He became Musical Director of the Chandos Singers of Bath in 2000, and founded Bath Chamber Opera in 2011.

He also served as organist at Holy Trinity Church, Queen Square for many years, more recently becoming co-organist at St John the Evangelist Catholic Church.

This concert includes a small selection of Malcolm's solo, operatic and choral works, over 200 of which can be found on open access at imslp.org/wiki/Category:Hill,_Malcolm.

For more information about Malcolm and his music, visit malcolm-hill.co.uk, bathchamberopera.co.uk, and chandossingers.co.uk.

Women on Top (excerpts)

Women on Top is a Comedy Opera (Malcolm never wanted them to be called 'comic operas'!), based on Aristophanes' comedy *The Assembly Women*. It was premiered in Box and Bath in 2015.

The women of Athens plot to take over the government and when they succeed introduce radical new laws, including common ownership of all property, control of all finances by wives, and an edict that no man can have sex with a young attractive woman until he's been with an old one first. It is subversive, politically incorrect, and contains more cross-dressing than a Christmas pantomime.

from Scene One – opening:

Before dawn Praxagora is waiting for her band of women to turn up so they can infiltrate the assembly in disguise. Eventually Kalonike turns up and Praxagora instructs her how to impersonate a man, with a false beard and armpit hair. They then sing a duet ('Why have so few come at all?')

from Scene Two – Chremes' narration and duet with Blepyrus:

Blepyrus (Praxagora's husband) has missed the Assembly and his friend Chremes is filling him in on what happened – the extract begins as his narrative reaches its climax. To Blepyrus's horror he explains that women now rule the state and will control all the money. Then as they realise that now they as men will 'no longer have to work from daybreak' and instead they can 'gossip, groan and grumble to their hearts' content' they break into a duet which Malcolm described as a 'Handelian Sailor Song'.

from Scene Four – opening, and final quintet:

An elderly, ugly prostitute (sung by a deep bass) is setting out a lamp to attract custom in an aria which parodies the opening of Scene One. A younger prostitute arrives and the two have a slanging match. When they've both stomped offstage a young man (sung by a soprano) appears, a bit worse for drink and looking for female company – he sings a surprisingly lyrical aria before being accosted by the elderly slut.

We leave them at that point as the situation deteriorates into chaos, and rejoin the opera for the final section. Praxagora's maid appears to summon the citizens of Athens to a feast (the traditional end to any Aristophanic comedy). Blepyrus appears, confused and looking for his supper, and the Young Man leads them all towards the feast. Two other elderly prostitutes join them in a closing quintet which echoes the melody of the duet in Scene One in which the lyrics entirely consist of a long list of Greek delicacies, ancient and modern.

Prax Where can I hang this lamp to rally my women?

Blaze, O lamp light; blaze with all fervour brightly, to my women, summoning them to come here now, as we have something to do together; I need you all now. Blaze, O lamp light, shine like you've never ever shone before, to bring all the women sworn to make this city best in the run of things and best in its running.

Dawn's approaching, the Assembly will be starting soon and no-one's here! This really will not do!

Yoiks! I can see a light coming - I'd better hide in case it turns out to be a man!

Kalo Come on, come on! The cock was crowing for the second time when I left home - it's time we were off, Praxagora.

Prax And I've been waiting for hours!

Kalo My dear! it's been so difficult to escape from my husband! He got indigestion, poor thing; all through the night nothing but burp, burp, burp.

Prax No matter. Let's check that we are ready. Ev'ry day I've rubb'd my body from top to toe with oil, then sunn'd myself all day to look like a man.

Kalo You'd never know it! I threw my razor away and now boast a good manly growth under my arm.

Prax Have you brought a beard for the Assembly?

Kalo Of course, and the staff whose weight makes my husband fart.

Prax Splendid.

Kalo And I've brought my wool to card during the Assembly.

Prax Wool! In the Assembly! A man picking wool?

Kalo Since when did unravelling wool stop me listening to men?

Prax That's not the point. At the Assembly we must not be mistaken for women. Come on - we'll cover our breasts with our beards, and don our husbands' cloaks, then on to the Assembly - we'll save the ship of state which at the moment no mere man seems able to sail or row.

Kalo How will we women manage with all that orat'ry?

Prax That's why we've met, to plan the speech for the Assembly.

(to the audience) Why have so few come at all? Each one knew just how vital it was to be here. Where are the women with brains, so we can improve our lot; where are all those who promised to come, they surely aren't so weak in their minds: if they knew just who's arrived, I'm sure they'd not be pleased, she's such a nincompoop! I've done all I can to spread the word, many promised they would come to support me. She's such a silly bird-brain, but now she's here I'll have to give her a chance before I take o'er.

Kalo (to the audience) Why's she giving me such ugly looks? Why does she give me such dirty looks? When I'm the only one who's come to support her. After all, I'm the only one who's bothered to come. Oh, why are no others here? I'd not come at all if I'd known. So help me, I think I'll go home. She made a list of what we must bring, but gave no clue about why we should. All she does is criticize and pull a face at me. Oh! What a control freak!

Crem The final part of his speech, which summ'd up all he'd said, was in effect that our women are the sole fountain heads of all true wisdom, first-rate professors of political economy, strict observers of secrecy; for when did women, did women divulge the mysteries, while with men state secrets are always in danger.

Blep (to the audience) There's something in that!

(to Crem) What was the final outcome?

Crem To invest the women with the powers of government. With all the changes that our city has so often experienc'd, this alone remains untried.

Blep You mean this bill has been passed?

Crem I do. And all the powers that until today were held by men now are transferr'd to women.

Blep What? My vote lost to my wife?

Crem Yes, and she will also manage all the money at home too.

Blep But does this mean that we no longer have to work from daybreak?

Crem Yes, my friend, now it's our wives' turn. And so, from now on, it's our privilege to gossip, groan and grumble to our heart's content. Ev'ry man must yield to the new decree;

but then there's the old maxim: "Our most stupid decrees always have a happy conclusion".
May the Gods grant so in this case too.

Crem and Blep So now it's our privilege to groan and grumble to our heart's content.

Cron Here I'll place my lamp to rally my lovers.

Blaze, O lamp light, blaze with fervour brightly, to my lovers, summoning them to come here now, as we have something to do together; I need you all now. Blaze, O lamp light, calling my lovers here, but not so bright my wrinkles and spots are seen, they're hidden 'neath this powder and paint, so that I still seem attractive.

Slut What's this lamp for? Calling your lovers here? You ancient crone, you haven't a hope with those looks, I can take my pick from the pool of men who want my attention.

Cron Be perdition thy fate! And when with thy mate, by slumber oppressed, thou hast sunk down to rest, may the tester give way and o'erwhelm thee, I pray, and when to his breast thou may'st wish to be pressed; may the folds of an asp in his stead round thee clasp!

Slut Wrinkled grandam, cavil not at the youthful maiden's happy lot; for her it is to fire the heart, for her it is to heal the smart.

On my gently budding breast love delights to take his rest, while such as you their wrinkled charms must keep for grisly Charon's arms! Your long neck, you old cat, you just have to crane, and stretch your crack'd pipe till it burst; but you labour in vain, believe me, for the men will all come to me first!

Cron May they find thee a corpse!

Slut Good mother, thanks, but I am blooming, young and fresh, and don't intend to die.

Cron Young and blooming minx!

Slut Aha! I see the grapes are sour, I'd be ancient if that was in your power.

Cron What signifies my age?

Slut Not a jot, but from your paint and cosmetics such an odour comes, as almost makes me faint. I'll withdraw from this stench and wait for my lovers to ask for a date.

Cron For myself, I too will go back inside where I can rest my shrivelled backside.

Chap Luscious nectar to sip, from the roseate lip of this maiden, how great the delight! But if I must first court this granny accurst, the penance will kill me outright!

Cron Repent it, I swear, you shall, if you dare with the damsel at all to make free; 'tis vain to defy the law, so comply, and first your "devoirs" do to me.

Chap The feast hath warmed my soul for love, flushed am I with generous wine; now, ye gods, propitious prove, grant the damsel may be mine!

Then ope the door, and fondly caress me, and fondly press me to thy bosom, and caress me; Thou gav'st the wound whence bleeds my heart, 'tis thine, then, sweet, to heal the smart!

Cron Knocked you, pry thee, at my door, in quest of me?

Chap Not I.

Cron Then wherefore give a tap?

Chap If I did, now let me die.

Cron Alas, for thee, with love I pine, this very night shalt thou be mine.

Maid (to audience) Joyful Athens, joyful our citizens, for now my mistress governs the state of Athens. Women hold the purse and the role of lawyers; what could be better?! Now the feast is well under way, and I am charged with bringing even more wine, yes - vintage. Also I should summon my mistress's husband: anyone seen him?

Maid O happy, and thrice happy mas-ter. Master, hail.

Blep Happy? What I, forsooth?

Maid Beyond compare! For who more fit to claim the name of happy than who of thrice ten thousand citizens alone tonight has gone without his supper.

Chap The truth of your words, none, I'll swear, can refute or that happy your good master's lot is, dispute.

Maid Where goest now, Master?

Blep Why, to supper!

Chap To the banquet I'll not delay, by gracefully holding this torch, light the way.

Chap and Maid Without more delay, haste away.

Quintet Soon will appear all sorts of good cheer; limpets and oysters and salted fish, and of skate too a dish; lampreys with the remains of sharp sauce and birds' brains; with honey so luscious, plump blackbirds and thrushes, cocks' combs and ring doves; which each epicure loves. Also wood pigeons blue with juicy snipes too. Soft fish, calamari, mousaka, kleftikon, dolmathes, spanakones ... which all epicures love.

Avon Street - en plein air: Dawn, Midnight

In 2016, Anna Kot and Carlos Ordonez in association with Fringe Arts Bath produced an art-fed book entitled *find another bath* which included poems by Caroline Heaton, choral settings of some of whose works Chandos had already performed. The book concentrates on the city's workers not the wealth and grandeur more readily associated with the city's public image. Poems by Bath authors alternate with works by Bath painters, sculptors and photographers.

Malcolm Hill set Caroline's Avon Street poem with a view to performing it in the Magdalen Chapel and having the associated picture, by Ben Hughes, on display. The first performance, given by members of the Chandos Singers, took place there on 8th July 2017, with the painting by Ben Hughes displayed throughout the concert.

Caroline Heaton was enthusiastic about the idea, and readily gave permission for her poem *Avon Street – en plein air* to be set.

Dawn

A breeze stirs litter,
the air is still cool,
light fraying the remnants
of night; a cat slinks home.

the long façades of Bath College
wall you in, serried windows
reflecting the early rain, its fall
on pavement, city's buried roots.

Midnight

New LED lights cast a surgical glow,
compete with lamps of sodium orange:
the street is a concrete stage-set
floodlit for revelry or disaster.

The unlit tow-path alone breathes
a welcome stench of green, pot-pourri
of weeds and water, the river rippling
blackly beyond the reach of electricity:

above and very far a scatter of stars,
blurred by swift clouds,
the boat-bordered path
luring you on –

Alone Walking from *Eight Solo Songs of 1500*

Eight Songs of 1500 was composed in 2016 to alternate between secular choral works of 1500-1520 in part two of a concert given by the Chandos Singers in July 2016. The Eight Songs are secular ballades, carols and drinking songs whose texts were well known during the period.

Alone walking In thought pleining And sore sighing All desolate, Me remembering Of my living My deth wishing Bothe erly and late. Infortunate Is so my fate That – wote ye whate? – Oute of mesure My life I hate. Thus desperate In suche pore estate Do I endure. Of other cure Al I nat sure Thus to endure Is hard certain. Suche is my ure I you ensure –	What creature May have more pain? My trouth so plein Is take in vein And gret disdain In remembraunce. Yet I full feine Wold me compleine Me to absteine from this penaunce. But in substance Noon allegeaunce Of my grevaunce Can I nat finde. Right so my chaunce With displeasaunce Doth me avauce – And thus an ende.
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Bath – the Graveyard of Ambition (excerpts)

First performed in 2017, *Bath - the Graveyard of Ambition* was written to mark the opera's leading tenor Robert Jack's moving from Bath to Cambridge at the end of August.

The comedy-opera is set in a Doctor's waiting room in Bath, where various patients discuss their problems with the City: Seagulls, Pollution, Library-closures, Parking, etc.. v Georgian architecture, Walks along the river, the various Festivals. It is largely written in a neo-Baroque style, based on texts and tunes of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Today's extracts are from the concluding scenes of the opera. First, a new arrival (sung by Jane Hunt) sings about how much she's looking forward to living in Bath – the only member of the extensive cast who remains starry-eyed about the place. Then the Doctor (who has remained unseen throughout the opera) finally appears with a despairing tirade against his job and against the City. The new arrival and the receptionist conclude the piece by reflecting that few people even have the energy left to leave Bath.

Jane I'm sure I won't have any problems here. *Methinks I hear, methinks I see sweet music, wondrous melody, towns, palaces and cities fine, here now in Bath the world is mine, rare beauties, gallant ladies shine, whate'er is lovely or divine, when to myself I act and smile, with pleasing thoughts the time beguile, by a brook-side or wood so green, unheard, unsought for, or unseen, a thousand pleasures do me bless, and crown my soul with happiness.*

Doctor When I came to Bath, I had high hopes that I could get lots of experience and then move on and up. Now I've no plans, just forms. The surgery's moving – I do not care where. The clients all moaning I really can't bear, so few need my knowledge – they just look on the net then tell me what potions and pills they should get. In many a city they come and then

go when ambition gets them moving to somewhere 'just so'; but in Bath they ne'er think of a job far away – instead they get ailments and settle and stay! I've had it with Bath – pretentious or poor, the patients for ever just knock on my door all hours of the night – of this I am sure: their lives aren't worth saving – I can take it no more!

Receptionist He should have said the life not worth saving was his, not ours. With all the training he had, and that was funded by us, he should just work without making a fuss. I come from Bath and will not hear such things from out his mouth or rear. Elsewhere in the South do shine far lesser lights, for Bath is fine.

Jane Methinks I hear, methinks I see sweet music, wondrous melody, towns, palaces and cities fine, here now in Bath the world is mine. I came to Bath and here I'll stay, as long as night doth follow day. Their minds are full of inhibition: it's theirs, not Bath's, this "Graveyard of Ambition".

Sonnet LXV

Malcolm's setting of Sonnet LXV was composed in 2005 (revised 2015). Jane Hunt performed Sonnet LXV in Chandos's 2016 concert to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. The punchline spells out both the poet and the composer's legacy: *That in black ink my love may still shine bright.*

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea
But sad mortality o'er-sways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Against the wrackful siege of batt'ring days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong, but time decays?
O fearful meditation! where, alack,
Shall time's best jewel from time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O, none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

The Walrus and the Carpenter

A school-friend of Malcolm Hill was abused by a local clergyman and the church authorities tried to cover up the incident – this led the boy and his very wealthy family to distrust all church authorities – they became active Quakers. In response to this injustice, when in 2005 Malcolm read Sir Shane Leslie's anti-cleric interpretation of the two Alice books, he was keen to promote this aspect in a series of 'warped cantatas'. While the chorus in a traditional cantata will tend to sing commentaries on the soloists' main text, Malcolm Hill gives the story to the choir, and soloists are used as 'erudite footnotes'. Just as the two Alice books contain numerous quotations, which are frequently slightly amended, so the composition includes many musical references to other compositions.

The main plot of this work is that Tum and Twee are about to fight over a ruined rattle, but are interrupted when a monstrous crow is seen. They then launch into one of their favorite songs, The Walrus and the Carpenter. This is commented on by a Minstrel, then the Dweedles return. Having found that the rattle had not been ruined, they again prepare to do battle. Erudite footnotes frequently and irregularly interrupt the work, which finishes with an improvised, multi-texted ensemble and the sighting of the monstrous crow.

Dweedletum and Deedletwee

Agreed to have a battle;

For Dweedletum said Deedletwee

Had spoiled his nice new rattle.

Just then flew down a monstrous crow,

As black as a tar-barrel;

Which frightened both the heroes so,

They quite forgot their quarrel.

Footnote: A black crow is cited in Carroll's book regarding its appetite for carrion in his book on animal conventions in English Renaissance non-religious prose (1550 to 1600); but a monstrous crow signifies the henchmen of the devil are close at hand.

Dweedletum and Deedletwee

forgot to have their battle.

The sea was wet as wet could be,

The sands were dry as dry.

You could not see a cloud, because

No cloud was in the sky:

No birds were flying overhead —

There were no birds to fly.

The Walrus and the Carpenter

Were walking close at hand;

They wept like anything to see

Such quantities of sand:

"If this were only cleared away,"

They said, "it would be grand!"

If seven maids with seven mops

Swept it for half a year,

"Do you suppose," the Walrus said,

"That they could get it clear?"

"I doubt it," said the Carpenter,

And shed a bitter tear.

Footnotes: The walrus, according to a cousin of Sir Winston Churchill, could be refer'd to the higher critics who had come into prominence at the time of writing. He meant Bishop Colenso and Dean Stanley.

This Walrus was discussed in a paper submitted to the Historical Theological Society at Gottingen University by Sir Shane Leslie (born in London in 1885, went to Eton then the Sorbonne then to King's College Cambridge; he wrote nearly forty books including "Life of Henry, Cardinal Manning", a Standard Work).

The seven maids with seven mops refer to the seven advanced essayists and reviewers, who (according to Shane Leslie) swept the Church clear of doctrinal dust in 1860. The oysters (according to Leslie) were the confiding young clergy.

"O Oysters, come and walk with us!"

The Walrus did beseech.

"A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,

Along the briny beach:

We cannot do with more than four,

To give a hand to each."

The eldest Oyster looked at him,

But never a word he said:

The eldest Oyster winked his eye,

And shook his heavy head —

Meaning to say he did not choose

To leave the oyster-bed.

But four young Oysters hurried up,

All eager for the treat:

Their coats were brushed, their faces washed,

Their shoes were clean and neat —

And this was odd, because, you know,

They hadn't any feet.

Four other Oysters followed them,

And yet another four;

And thick and fast they came at last,

And more, and more, and more —

All hopping through the frothy waves,

And scrambling to the shore.

The Walrus and the Carpenter

Walked on a mile or so,

And then they rested on a rock

Conveniently low:

And all the little Oysters stood

And waited in a row.

"The time has come," the Walrus said,

"To talk of many things:

Of Genesis and Exodus,

Leviticus and Kings,

And whether hell is boiling hot —

And angel-folk have wings.”

“But wait a bit,” the Oysters cried,
“Before we have our chat;
For some of us are out of breath,
And some of us are fat!”
“No hurry!” said the Carpenter.
They thanked him much for that.

“It seems a shame,” the Walrus said,
“To play them such a trick,
After we've brought them out so far,
And made them trot so quick!”
The Carpenter said nothing but
“The butter's spread too thick!”

“I weep for you,” the Walrus said:
“I deeply sympathize.”
With sobs and tears he sorted out
Those of the largest size,
Holding his pocket-handkerchief
Before his streaming eyes.

“O Oysters,” said the Carpenter,
“You've had a pleasant run!
Shall we be trotting home again?”
But answer came there none —
And this was scarcely odd, because
They'd eaten every one.

Oh! indeed?

Minstrel: That was the song that Dweedletum and Deedletwee sang when they together slowly came. But ev'ry then and now arose a fight with weapons not the same. Oh! Deary me! They had a sword: the sword of doctrine, they also had an umbrella that held all and let all things for all men in and worried less of deed or sin.

Footnotes: Ibid.
Op. cit.

Domino quando veneris

The very last piece in Malcolm's volume of Late Works (mj381), *Domine quando veneris* is marked *in mem. M.H.*

Malcolm has based his Requiem movement on a Gregorian chant from the Liber Usualis p.1787 – *Office for the Dead – Resp.8 at Matins* and set the text for soprano accompanied by organ – the instrument he played for nearly 70 years.

It's fitting that Malcolm's requiem is sung here by the Chair of Chandos, Katharine Adams.

<p>Domine, quando veneris judicare terram, ubi me abscondam a vultu irae tuae? Quia peccavi nimis in vita mea. Commissa mea pavesco et ante te erubescio: dum veneris judicare noli me condemnare, quia peccavi nimis in vita mea.</p>	<p><i>O Lord, when thou comest to judge the world, where shall I hide myself from the face of thy wrath? For I have sinned exceedingly in my life. I dread my sins, I blush before thee: when thou comest to judge, do not condemn me, for I have sinned exceedingly in my life.</i></p>
<p>Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine Et lux perpetua luceat eis Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem, Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem sempiternam.</p>	<p><i>Give them eternal rest, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine on them. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, give them rest. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, give them eternal rest.</i></p>

Bath Chamber Opera

Jane Hunt, Julia Rushworth, Katharine Adams,

Rupert Bevan, John Gutteridge, Paul Feldwick, Simon Caldwell

The Chandos Singers

Alison Alexander, Cate LeGrice Mack, Catherine Mitchell,

Dawn Chalmers, Debbie Warren, Judy Bowles, Katharine Adams,

Katherine Lush, Mandy Shaw, Mo Boys,

Brian Wilson, Charles Johnson, Chris Warren,

Frank Thynne, Hugh Osborne, John Gutteridge, Roger Latimer

Rupert Bevan conductor

Maria Garcia piano

Nicholas Edwards organ